


VOL. XXVIII
NO. 1
AUTUMN, 1978
ONE DOLLAR

Four Quarters





Four Quarters

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE FACULTY OF LA SALLE COLLEGE
PHILA., PA. 19141

VOL. XXVIII, No. 1

AUTUMN, 1978

November Elegy, poem by <i>Frederic Muratori</i>	2
Orwell's Road to Socialism, article by <i>John P. Rossi</i>	3
Waiting Out the Gathering Season, poem by <i>Robert DeMott</i>	11
Geometric Solution, poem by <i>Joanna Thompson</i>	12
Betjegen, story by <i>Charles Brashers</i>	13
A Small Tone, story by <i>Lewis Horne</i>	20
David Rittenhouse Unveils His Orrery, poem by <i>Austin Hughes</i>	27
Faustus the Monster, story by <i>Leslie Garrett</i>	28
God Sang, poem by <i>Kelly Cherry</i>	38
Deaf as a Post, poem by <i>Albert F. Moritz</i>	39
Three Poems by <i>Kelly Cherry</i>	40

Cover: "Christ Sitting Alone," by Georges Rouault; wood engraving for
Passion, 1939. Courtesy La Salle College Union Collection.

Four Quarters (USPS 971-140) is published quarterly in Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer by the faculty of La Salle College, 20th & Olney Aves., Phila., Pa. 19141. Subscriptions: \$4.00 annually, \$7.00 for two years. © 1978 by La Salle College. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope. Available in Microform from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. Indexed in American Humanities Index and Index of American Periodical Verse. Second class postage paid at Philadelphia, Pa.

November Elegy

FREDERIC MURATORI

This is a day when nothing rises,
When mist adheres to the ground.
Each expiration becomes a crisis
For the lungs, and prayers are found
To linger at the lips, not a sound
Escapes to air. Gravity is the god who bears
The world and keeps it round,
Maintains its place among the layers
Of planetoids and stars. Yet none of us cares
To hear his own part in this design:
That each is his own anchor live, but shares
In death the weight of soil-bound pine.
Still, we have enough of time to know
A horizontal progress, our shadows lengthening on snow.

Orwell's Road to Socialism

JOHN P. ROSSI

I

DURING THE 1930's, when British socialism was struggling to find its identity, it attracted names that read like a who's who of the British literary-political scene: John Strachey, Anuerin Bevan, Stephen Spender, W.H. Auden, et al. None of these young men was to leave a deeper (and one might say stranger) mark on British socialism than George Orwell, a little known critic, novelist, and essayist who made his first impression during the decade.

Orwell's fame as a writer has continued to grow impressively in the years since his untimely death in 1950. His reputation has withstood the rigorous test of time that has overtaken, and dated, the work of so many of his contemporaries. The key to Orwell's survival as a writer can be found in the outstanding qualities which emerge from even a quick perusal of his work: the scrupulous honesty, the obvious decency, the hatred of cant, and the anger at all forms of injustice that characterized almost everything he wrote. Few of the politically committed writers of the 1930's and 1940's were as rigorously honest with themselves and their work as Orwell. As a result much of his work retains freshness and vigor. But nowhere do Orwell's unique qualities as a writer and a person emerge more lucidly than in his eccentric road to socialism and his eventual disillusionment with Marxism in the years before his death in 1950.

Orwell came to socialism by a tortuous path. Education at Eton, service in the British Imperial Police in Burma, and then a painful apprenticeship as a novelist and critic left Orwell by the early 1930's a man searching for both a political and a literary identity. His earliest writings, especially his study of the lower depths, *Down and Out in Paris and London*, dealt largely with two themes, the British class system and the flaws inherent in capitalism. These writings tended to be bitter and rather diffuse in their arguments. They were characterized by moral outrage but they lacked direction toward any clear political end. The novels that he wrote during these years such as *Burmese Days*, *A Clergyman's Daughter*, and *Keep the Aspidistra Flying*, Orwell later considered hack work and purely a learning process. But the endurance of at least *Burmese Days*, which contains a brilliant indict-

ment of the racial arrogance that lay behind British imperialism, indicates that Orwell was often a poor judge of his own work.

In 1935, largely because of his experience with life among the very poor, he was assigned by Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club the task of investigating conditions among the chronically unemployed in the north of England, specifically those in the coal trade. From this assignment emerged Orwell's first widely read book, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, 1937.

The Road to Wigan Pier sold approximately 40,000 copies and established Orwell's reputation as a serious social critic. As a work of literature it was also as much a paradox as its author. *Wigan Pier* is divided into two parts. The first section contains a vivid picture of the desperate conditions in which the unemployed lived and is filled with brilliant insights into what life without work meant to the British working class. There are pages and paragraphs that are truly unforgettable; the rooming house in the north of England with the tripe shop in the front and the dead blue bottle flies among the tripe; the landlord passing buttered bread at breakfast with his coal-blackened thumb mark on the bread; Orwell's first trip down a coal mine. Orwell's eye for the kind of detail that sharpened a picture never worked to better advantage. The second section, which Gollancz expected would explain not only why capitalism failed but also how socialism would answer England's problems, instead dealt with the flaws and faults of socialists and socialism in general. In fact, it seemed that Orwell positively relished the chance to attack his allies on the left. He was particularly bitter with socialist intellectuals, regarding them as elitists who had no conception of what the poor were really like. In a phrase that was to be widely quoted by his enemies he heaped ridicule on his fellow leftists:

One sometime gets the impression that the mere worlds 'Socialism' and 'Communism' draw toward them with magnetic force every fruit-juice drinker, nudist, sandal-wearer, sex-maniac, Quaker, 'Nature Cure' quack, pacifist and feminist in England.

The Road to Wigan Pier not only showed that a wide gulf separated Orwell from his fellow leftists, but also demonstrated the romantic and moralistic side of his philosophy. There is a brittle anger in Orwell's picture of life in Wigan Pier, but it is an anger and bitterness that has more in common with the onslaughts of a Cobbett or a Hazlitt than a Marx. Like the former, Orwell constantly emphasized the essential decency and common sense of the English people. On the other hand, he showed little interest in the mechanistic explanations of poverty associated with Marxism.

Orwell's attacks on socialists as mandarins had a certain va-

lidity, but they were over-harsh. Partly this flowed from his moralism and partly from the fact that Orwell felt that he was an outsider and hated the English literary and political establishment. This feeling explains his constant attacks on "nancy poets" and "parlor boshies" as well as his characterization of a writer like Auden who flaunted his socialism as a "gutless Kipling." Alex Zwerdling in his brilliant study, *Orwell and the Left*, has noted that Orwell possessed a "naturally heretical cast of mind." It was typical of the heretic that he would save his special venom for his fellow leftists and for socialism as it was understood in England.

By 1937, then, Orwell had established his credentials as a socialist, but his views were not well formed, and he still did not call himself a socialist with any degree of consistency. His conception of socialism remained rather simplistic: he opposed all forms of inequality, wanted a fairer distribution of the nation's wealth and resources, and called for a concerted resistance by the democracies to all forms of fascism. Essentially his views were those of an English radical with roots in the 19th century rather than in any way uniquely socialist. Though there is evidence that he read Marx and was conversant with Marxist argumentation, Orwell's socialism, if it can be said to have existed by 1937, was closer to Proudhon than to Marx. Decency, fairness, and hatred of all forms of privilege concerned him more than specific Marxist programs or the plans of what he would later call 'the slide rule socialists.'

THE TURNING POINT for Orwell and for his conception of socialism was the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. As for many others on the left, this became the issue that formalized his conversion to socialism. And, paradoxically, at the same time it also marked the beginning of his disillusionment with socialism.

In December, 1936 Orwell went to Spain, but in his own unconventional fashion joined the anarchist dominated POUM in Catalonia rather than the Communist groups to which most volunteers flocked. Orwell spent about six months in Spain and absorbed certain impressions that he never forgot. For one thing he was convinced that the enthusiasm that characterized the early months of the war in Catalonia showed that equality and democracy were forces that could galvanize a nation. He also discovered that the Communists' priority was carrying out the wishes of the Soviet Union and not in establishing a people's democracy in Spain. In particular, Orwell was horrified when the Communist-dominated factions in the Republic turned on, and betrayed, their anarchist allies in Catalonia.

After suffering a serious neck wound in the fighting outside Barcelona, Orwell was invalided home to England where he began working on a brief but powerful recollection of his experiences, *Homage to Catalonia*. In it Orwell, to borrow the title of one of his essays, "spilled the Spanish beans." Written quickly and with a passion and intensity that was rare for him, *Homage to Catalonia* sought to tell the English public how the revolution in Spain had been betrayed by the Communists. When he tried to get this manuscript published, he discovered that the left-wing establishment to which he had access was not interested. As this was the heyday of the slogan 'no enemies on the left,' the socialist establishment did not want to offend the Communists. Gollancz, for example, rejected the manuscript without reading it. The *New Statesman*, the leading leftist journal in England, turned him down abruptly and its editor, Kingsley Martin, told Orwell it was the wrong time to publish an essay that could be construed as an attack on communism, democracy's ally in the struggle against fascism. Orwell was outraged: to know the truth but not to publish it because it would offend your allies was, he told Martin, to adopt the "mentality of the whore." He never forgave Martin for his intellectual cowardice.

Homage to Catalonia was eventually published by Secker and Warburg. It sold only 900 copies and hurt Orwell's reputation in socialist circles. As with the *Road to Wigan Pier*, he was regarded as perverse and unreliable. What was worse, he did not fit into any recognizable category. What do you do with a vigorous anti-fascist who also specialized in exposing the hypocrisy and failings of the left? Orwell was, and remained, a puzzle to his fellow socialists.

Paradoxically, it was after his service in Spain that Orwell formally embraced socialism. As he told his old school friend and literary ally, Cyril Connolly, his Spanish experience had made him a believer in socialism without reservation. In 1938, as a sign of his serious commitment to socialism, Orwell joined the Independent Labour Party, the most aggressively radical of the left-wing parties in England. His rationale was very simple; fascism had to be combatted, and this situation forced him "to be actively a Socialist, not merely sympathetic to socialism." Though Orwell did not see the inconsistency, he was now adopting the broad lines of Kingsley Martin's argument of the previous year. The common struggle against fascism outweighed all internal differences among the left. Still, Orwell's socialist notions had not crystallized. They remained the unsystematic, egalitarian, humanitarian, democratic views he had first developed on his own. Moreover, his formal conversion to socialism, arising out of his experiences in Spain, paralleled a growing suspicion of the Soviet Union and a deepening

detestation of communism.

Orwell is one of the few English leftists who remained unimpressed by the 'miracle' of the Soviet Union. Unlike Shaw, the Webbs, and Laski, Orwell never believed that the Soviet Union was some kind of worker's paradise. His earliest political writings contain no remarks concerning communism that he would later prefer to forget. In fact, where most British leftists remained admirers of the Soviet Union during the purges and treason trials, suffering their first doubts only over the Nazi-Soviet pact in 1939, Orwell's first recorded suspicions of Russia and Stalin can be dated as early as 1935.

II

ALTHOUGH ORWELL'S socialism developed from his experiences in the Spanish Civil War, he remained very skeptical about the loyalties and beliefs of his fellow socialists. His differences with them remained both ideological and political. By the late 1930's Orwell was becoming increasingly concerned with the totalitarian tendencies he believed communism, fascism, and socialism now shared. This fear of totalitarianism emerged as the guiding theme of the last decade of Orwell's life. As John Wain has noted, up to 1937 Orwell saw the world struggle as between left and right. After 1937 he saw it in terms of democracy versus totalitarianism, and he no longer cared whether the totalitarianism called itself left or right. Orwell himself put the point with characteristic bluntness in his essay on Arthur Koestler, a fellow socialist disillusioned with communism by the war in Spain: "the sin of nearly all left-wingers from 1933 onwards is that they have wanted to be anti-Fascist without being anti-totalitarian." Orwell was one of the few writers of his generation to recognize this point.

During World War II Orwell's growing fear of totalitarianism further merged with his sense of disenchantment with socialism. Although he remained a socialist and a supporter of the Labour Party, Orwell was incensed by the way his fellow socialists fawned over the Soviet Union after the German attack on Russia in 1941. As in the 1930's, Orwell remained essentially a moralist who had never forgotten the horrors of the Russian purge trials. For him one of the litmus tests of intellectual honesty on the left was a willingness to criticize the Soviet Union. He believed that a failure to be scrupulously honest in dealing with Soviet blemishes eventually would create a revulsion on the part of the English public, a revulsion that would lead them to reject the whole idea of socialism and not just its unsavory aspects.

Orwell's differences with his fellow socialists, however, went deeper than just disagreements over the Soviet Union. The war

brought out tendencies in himself that Orwell had only hinted at in the past. Most interestingly, he discovered his patriotism. He volunteered for military service but was rejected for medical reasons. He then enlisted in the Home Guard, later famous as "Dad's Army," that strange mix of the lame, the old, and the exotic. Orwell also went to work for the BBC, a post he hated, and began writing a column for the *Tribune*, the leftist newspaper edited by Nye Bevan.

During the war some of Orwell's best writing reflected a vigorous and honest love of country. Nowhere did this show through more clearly than in his long pamphlet, *The Lion and the Unicorn*, published in 1941. In this essay Orwell defended patriotism as a concept that should not be allowed to remain the exclusive preserve of the conservatives. Nor should socialists ridicule patriotism as a dated notion. Patriotism, for Orwell, "was the bridge between the future and the past." He noted with characteristic perception that "no real revolutionary has ever been an internationalist," a remark that scandalized his fellow socialists. Orwell believed that the patriotism of the English middle classes could be transformed into support for socialism if only his fellow socialists did not show so much contempt for the bourgeoisie and their values.

Perhaps because of his newly discovered patriotism, Orwell found it difficult to accept the pessimism of the left about the outcome of war. In his first letter to the American journal *Partisan Review*, Orwell attacked the left for its defeatism. They had never believed that any English government would really stand up to Hitler. The British declaration of war, following closely on the Nazi-Soviet pact, left socialism paralyzed without a policy. Somewhat romantically, Orwell contrasted the defeatism of the left with the attitude of the common people who were determined to resist the Nazis at all costs.

At the same time as Orwell rediscovered his patriotism and continued his skepticism about the Soviet brand of socialism, he began to show signs of what Malcolm Muggeridge called a deeply conservative temperament. Like most conservatives, Orwell loved the past, at times almost romanticizing it, hated the present, and dreaded the future. Muggeridge, in his superb essay on Orwell, "A Knight of the Woeful Countenance," believes that the conservative undertow in Orwell's leftist views helps to explain his growing popularity in the mid-1940's. "A bourgeoisie like ours on the run." Muggeridge notes, "is always looking for someone who combines impeccable intelligentsia credentials with a passion, secret or avowed . . . for maintaining the status quo." Actually, Orwell was not so much wed to the status quo as he was skeptical about the future about which so many of his contemporaries dreamed. Their

utopia became his nightmare.

LATE IN THE WAR Orwell began writing his best known work, *Animal Farm*, a political fable based on the betrayal of the idealism of the Russian Revolution. It was partly inspired by the cowardly behavior and cynicism of the leftist establishment over the years. Orwell hoped that *Animal Farm* would counteract the naivete that so many otherwise intelligent people in England showed toward the real purposes of the Soviet Union.

Once again Orwell had great difficulty finding a publisher for a work that could be considered an attack on an ally in time of war. The British press in general steered clear of any controversy with the Soviets or anything that was critical of Stalin. Orwell discovered just how sensitive they were to criticism of the Soviet Union when, in 1944 his favorable review of Harold Laski's *Faith, Reason and Civilisation* was rejected by the *Manchester Evening News* on the grounds that it contained material hostile to Russia. When *Animal Farm* appeared in 1945, the socialist establishment greeted it with embarrassment. Orwell's *bete noire*, Kingsley Martin, reviewed the fable in the *New Statesman* with what could only be called condescension. Orwell, he said, was a critic without a remedy who had exhausted his sense of idealism. What was worse, according to Martin, Orwell was reaching into the "bathos of cynicism" in *Animal Farm*: Orwell had not lost his faith in socialism; he had lost his belief in mankind.

The entire review reeked with a thinly veiled hostility to Orwell as well as seriously underestimating the import of his book. For example, it is difficult to understand what was cynical about *Animal Farm*. More than most works of fiction, it had a powerful moral point to make. But Martin's review was typical of the reception *Animal Farm* received from the left. It is no wonder Orwell thought them contemptible. Muggeridge remembered a lunch he had with Orwell shortly after the war. Orwell asked Muggeridge if he would mind changing seats. When they had done so, Orwell explained that Martin was sitting at an adjoining table and he (Orwell) could not bear to look at Martin's corrupt face.

Animal Farm and *1984*, which appeared in 1949, completed Orwell's disenchantment with socialism. At the same time as the cold war developed, Orwell found himself and his views suddenly becoming fashionable among conservatives and anti-communists. Although he found it disconcerting, he was unable to counteract the growing conservative interpretation given to his writings. In fact, he remained sympathetic and loyal to the radical section of the Labor party, the faction associated with old friends like Nye Bevan, Jennie Lee, and Michael Foot. However, once the Labor

government was formed and began the tedious process of constructing the welfare state, Orwell gradually lost interest in it. He tried to defend his work from incorrect interpretations, but he had little success. He wrote the *New York Times*, for example, when 1984 appeared in the United States, that it "was not intended as an attack on Socialism or the British Labour Party (of which I am a supporter) but as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralized economy is liable and which have been partly realized in Communism and Fascism."

Despite his protests it was clear that Orwell had changed significantly since the writing of *Animal Farm*. His criticism of his fellow socialists at times was downright bitter. Moreover, Orwell, who once wrote that the British people would rather associate with Russia than the United States, had changed his opinion as the cold war developed. Writing in 1947 he noted:

If you had to choose between Russia and America, which would you choose? . . . We are no longer strong enough to stand alone, and if we fail to bring a western European union into being, we shall be obliged, in the long run, to subordinate our policy to that of one Great Power or the other. And in spite of all the fashionable chatter of the moment, everyone knows in his heart that we should choose America.

ORWELL'S DISENCHANTMENT with socialism was completed by 1984, a work that has been characterized by Alex Zwerdling as Orwell's farewell to socialism. The pessimism which Orwell was prey to at times predominated strongly in this study of the "future as nightmare." Socialism requires an optimism about the future and Orwell in the last years of his life lacked that optimism. He was still writing and absorbed in plans for a new project when he died, but socialism as a major concern no longer interested him. Too many socialist compromises and betrayals had soured him on the left, despite his continued formal allegiance. When he died in 1950, Orwell was already far on the road toward enshrinement as a hero of the conservative, anti-communist world. As an unsympathetic critic, John Bevan, has noted: "It is as a critic of socialism that Orwell will be remembered, not as the socialist missionary he would have liked to be." Bevan is right. Orwell was a far better critic than he was a missionary. British socialism of the 1930's and early 1940's, with its record of failures, missed opportunities, and cowardly compromises desperately needed someone who would criticize from within the movement. This was Orwell's role. What is more, Orwell often transcended the role of critic and became socialism's conscience, something it needed even more.

Waiting Out the Gathering Season

(For James Magner)

ROBERT DeMOTT

Done with their spiralling flight from the South,
Woodcock are mating near Minker's Run.
The male, smaller, is desire; the female, memory.

Once, in rural Connecticut, a child mending
From accident, I watched their amorous display
Hold back the sweeping net of darkness.

Jim, these damp spring evenings, I lose count
Of myself, and think I understand what you meant,
No light leaps. My head aches when I trace the
Hatchwork of stitches on my skull, They are
Footprints of birds migrated so long ago
I can hardly recall their plumage. Only the
Russet breast feathers seem important now, those
Sheathing the heart, fragile in the grip of shot.

Last fall, bowed beneath a bare choir of sumac,
I retrieved a crippled woodcock. Its head lolled
From my palm, the slender bill splayed, one eye
Collapsed in blood. In the fading light I
Tried to smooth its splintered wings. My hands,
Clotted wrist-high with feathers, became a
Brace of birds, clumsier than earth.

Tonight, trying to imagine flight, I shake
My hands again. Outside, snow loose as down
Flurries the April landscape. The air is
Gathering; only weather outlasts me.

Geometric Solution

JOANNA THOMPSON

Slowly the world moves into nursing homes,
yet we keep the gnomon, the figure left
after one parallelogram, smaller, is removed
from the larger that touched it at one corner.

If I plant a tree beside the sundial,
the style will change its shadow indicator,
not interpreting the day correctly;
yet my tree is hidden in their forests.

Today is cloudy and the gnomon stops.
Having found its certain path, the ancients
never questioned what the young would question.
What dark days produced their elaborated theorems
and their clocks whose styles move
no matter what?

I see a strange gnome, hunched indicator
of my parents' passing sun, tangential
to the moon, which, in the narrow eyes
of minutes, calculates certain dark.
I am one parallelogram removed
from their graves.

Betjegen

CHARLES BRASHERS

BETJEGEN WIPEd the steel drainboard once more, glanced proudly at the thirty-two quarts of green beans she had canned that day, and strolled into the living room. Erik was leafing through a copy of *Farm Journal*, and Mary Lou, his wife, was looking in *TV Guide* to see what was on. It was Erik who noticed the Indian staring in the window—a short, gaunt face under a traditional red cotton headband. It was Betjegen's brother from the reservation.

Betjegen went to the door, but her brother refused to come in. So she went out to the edge of the lawn and, while Erik and Mary Lou watched from the open door, she and her brother had a short, muffled conversation in Navajo. She turned back to the house.

"What is it, Betty-Jean?" asked Erik and Mary Lou simultaneously.

"My mother," said Betjegen. "She's very sick. They don't expect her to live."

"Then you must go at once," said Mary Lou, taking her in her arms. "That's what your brother wants, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Come. I'll help you pack a few things."

By the time Betjegen had found her handbag and put a few clean shirts and Levis in her valise, Erik had gathered a gunny-sack of fresh corn. "And why don't you take some of your beans?" said Mary Lou. "And some packages of beef? We certainly have enough to share a little."

"Well, maybe some of the beans," said Betjegen.

"Don't you want to take some meat? They have a little freezer on their refrigerator, don't they?"

"Yes."

"Then take a few packages."

"You're sure you won't mind?"

Mary Lou wrapped four packages of frozen meat in several layers of newspaper and put them in a small cardboard box, along with five jars of the green beans.

They went outside. Erik and Betjegen's brother were putting the sack of corn in the back of Betjegen's pick-up. Mary Lou put

the box of meat and beans beside it. Betjegen stood beside the open door, holding her handbag and valise.

"Maybe I should go with you?" offered Erik.

"No, silly," said Betjegen. "I must have driven the road a hundred times. I'm not likely to get lost." Erik took her valise, went around the pick-up, and put it on the floor on the passenger's side.

Still Betjegen hesitated. "I was going to hem Carole's dress."

"I'll do it tomorrow," said Mary Lou. "As strict as you are, you'd probably make it too long to suit Carole."

Betjegen swung up into the pick-up, like a person swinging into a saddle. Her brother hurried away, to the back of the barn where he had tethered his bony horse. Erik closed her door and kept his hands on the metal sill, looking up at her in the dim light. "Now, Betty-Jean, be sure to get word to us if you need anything, you hear?"

"You're sure it's okay?" said Betjegen. "You'll be able to manage?"

"Oh, sure. No need to worry. We'll make out okay."

AS ALWAYS, Betjegen was warmed by the support of Erik and his family. She had come to live with the Collins family when she was eleven and Erik was ten. They grew up practically as twins. When she finished high school, she took a job as a typist for a hardware merchant and stayed on with elder Collinses. She helped with the cleaning, the cooking, the sewing, the canning. After all the Collins children had married and moved away, she nursed many a 'cousin' and many a 'nephew' or 'neice' through one kind of sickness or another. Later, she became a companion and housekeeper to the elder Collinses, who loved her perhaps more than one of their own. They left her the big house, a nice annuity, and a small lump sum in their will.

After the death of the elder Collinses, Betjegen was lost in grief for a long while. Unable to stay in the big house because it reminded her too much of her loss, she moved in temporarily with Erik and Mary Lou. But she had no job, no purpose, and soon felt lonely and out of place.

She went back to her family on the reservation and put herself to work. She helped her father apply for a government housing grant, and she got a subsidy to drill a well. She cleared and planted a garden, then installed the pump and dug the ditches herself; she was a good mechanic and wrangler. But her sisters' husbands made snide remarks about her work, so that she began to feel like an intruder, and the loneliness of the bald, flat horizon depressed her. When the small frame house was built, her mother and father refused to move into it, because it was all squares and rectangles. The circle of the hogan seemed more natural to them.

Betjegen again developed the stomach and bowel trouble she frequently had when visiting the reservation and had to move back to town. Erik and Mary Lou took care of her. When she recovered, she became a sort of self-appointed maid to Mary Lou and a hand on the ranch with Erik. She more than earned her own way, but Erik and Mary Lou felt she had no life of her own. They wanted to help her, but she was hard to please.

She owned the big house, but did not want to live in it. Erik offered to help her if she wanted to build a small house of her own, where she could organize her life the way she wanted. He even suggested she select a nice trailer house, which she could take back and forth from the home place to the reservation.

But Betjegen would hear nothing of it.

She was hysterically afraid of living alone.

SHE HEARD THEM singing in the night even before she could see their bodies silhouetted against the fire. Friends and relatives from the whole area had gathered for a medicine dance. They danced in a big square around the fire, moving their feet and swaying to the rhythm of their chanting. The firelight glinted off the cabs of the pick-ups parked around the dance.

In the hogan, a doctor was drumming and chanting over a small sand painting. Within its circle, the four directions and their powers were represented. Betjegen's mother, naked to the waist, was leaning against a roof support. Betjegen could tell at a glance that she had a high fever. She was flushed and sweating more than the little ceremonial fire could account for.

Betjegen waited near the door until there was a break in the medicine ceremony. She went to her mother and touched her hand.

Her mother focused her eyes on Betjegen and smiled weakly. She murmured the Navajo greeting and added in her few words of English, "Good . . . you—here."

Betjegen felt her mother's forehead. About 102^o, she estimated. "Where is the hurt, mamacita?" she asked.

"Some enemy has shot his pins into my neck and head. And into my bones. It must be that witch that lives on Mesquite Mesa."

"Has the doctor from the Indian Health Service been here?"

No one acknowledged that she had asked the question, as was their way of ignoring a social mistake. Betjegen knew, even in the asking, that they would not answer. Even if the doctor had come and left some medicine, she knew her mother would have left it lying where the doctor had put it down. Such primitivism enraged her. Would they never change?

Betjegen guessed that her mother had some kind of virus and would recover in a few days. About the only thing anyone could do

was try to relieve the pain. She dug in her handbag for the box of aspirin she always carried, but she did not offer them to her mother. Instead, she handed them to the doctor. He nodded and shook out two to give her mother, then he waited.

Betjegen understood. "Mamacita," she called out lowly, "I'm going out to dance in the medicine square, so that we may drive the pain-bugs from your body."

She went out in their silence, borrowed a shawl from her younger brother's wife, and joined the medicine square. She knew the basic superstition of the dance. One moved to the north to dialog with the powers of the cold, of destruction, but also of wisdom and balance. One danced to the south to get in touch with emotionalism, warmth, nurturing powers, the spirit of the harvest. One prayed to the east to creativity, beginnings, the future; to the west to the powers of death, immortality, the persistence of spirit. The chanting was also a dialog with the powers. It was supposed to integrate all variant perspectives upon the present moment.

Her brother's message had hardly been integrated, she reflected. It was about as unbalanced and as destructive as it could possibly be. Unrealistic as usual, her family had jumped to a wrong conclusion again. There was no need for her to be here at all.

Still, if it would humor them, she would dance. If they saw it as helping her mother, she would go through the motions. They danced past the dawn.

THAT AFTERNOON, her mother was better. Though she still felt weak, the pain and fever were gone. The worst part of the illness was past.

In small family groups, the friends and relatives that had participated in the medicine dance went away, and Betjegen was left with her mother and father, her sisters and their husbands and children.

She had forgotten the meat in the flurry of arrival; it had thawed and was on the verge of spoiling. It would have thawed anyway, for, Betjegen discovered, the refrigerator was not plugged in. Her mother and sisters stored flour, cornflakes, and other things they didn't use in it. One glance at the stove told her they hardly used it either, preferring to cook outside on an open fire. The beds and sheets also had been used very little.

The garden she had planted when she was home last had gone to weeds. "Why didn't you hoe the garden, like I told you?" she berated her sisters' husbands. "Don't you understand that you can't get squash and beans if you don't cut the weeds?"

They made no comment.

"The children, then. Can't you get your children to hoe the weeds?"

"They are needed with the sheep," they said.

Her brothers-in-law were silent for a long time. At last, one of them said, "That may be all right for you white people, but how can you expect a Navajo to offend the earth like that?"

It was the same, every time she tried to talk some sense into her relatives. Just such incidents had led her to talk more than once, at Collins family reunions, of "those lazy Indians on the reservation that wouldn't do anything but lay around and draw their welfare checks." Frequently, after visits to her family, she returned to her Collins home with bowels that were sour, not just from the foods and spices she was unused to.

She gave her sisters the cuts of meat that could be dried and cured in the Navajo way, and she got out the skillet to fry the ground meat. Even though she was exhausted from a sleepless night, she set the table in the house, opened two jars of the green beans, made biscuits from flour she had brought once before, and boiled some of the fresh corn.

The family sat at the table, awkward in their chairs and clumsy with their knives and forks. She knew they were trying to please her. They all ate some of the beans, politely, but she could tell they did not like the taste. The beans lacked their kind of seasoning. The biscuits and the greasy fried hamburger they ate with some pleasure. The fresh corn not one of them touched.

WHEN SHE was dressed for bed that night, Betjegen realized that she was the only person in the house. She tried to calm herself, knowing that the others were only a dozen steps away, in the hogan, or in wraps on the ground. She lay, tense with exhaustion, but found herself stiff, straining to hear imagined noises. She put on her robe and went outside.

She murmured the Navajo greeting, "Yah'teh," at the entrance to the hogan, stooped, and went in. Her mother was asleep, but her father was awake in the dark. She sat on a sheepskin, beside her father.

"Papacita. What's wrong?"

"Why, nothing is wrong, little Betjegen."

"Yes, it is. I try and try to show you all how to live better—and nothing ever happens." She was so tired, she could not stop herself from beginning to cry.

"You must be patient with us, little Betjegen."

"I am patient."

"We can change only slowly. We need time."

"Time!" she cried, tears running down her cheeks now. "I've stopped counting the years I've tried to get you to understand about germs—and nutrition—and—and health and comfort. I've tried

until I'm sick of trying. And it's always, 'Wait a little, little Betjegen.' Papa, tell me what's wrong."

Her mother was awake and looking at her.

Her father was silent for a long while. Then he built a small fire in the middle of the hogan floor, like a ceremonial fire. Her mother sat up. Her father drummed on the clay floor with his fingers and chanted part of the Blessing Way—only fragments. Then he stopped and looked at his daughter.

"Why did you send me away when I was little, Papcita?"

"For your welfare," he said. "We were so poor. There was no food. Many children were sick with hunger. Their little bodies just wasted . . ."

"Was I like that?"

"Yes."

"I don't know; perhaps it would have been better if I had died. Then maybe—" She broke off, unable to express her ambiguity and frustration.

Her father said nothing. He searched for and found a small drum, then began thrumming and singing part of a curing ceremony. Her sisters and their husbands heard and came in to take their places in the circle of the hogan.

Her father stopped singing, and they all looked at her in silence. She understood. It was her chenille robe and nylon nightgown.

It was not just that their smell offended her family; they would have tolerated that in polite silence.

It was not just that they were in the style and taste of the white man; for they too wore ordinary clothes.

The robe and gown were veils. They disguised the real person. More, they hindered the inner soul from perceiving reality, they hindered sensory communion with the spirit of the ceremonial fire, hindered communion with the good feelings of others.

For a moment, the Betty-Jean in her rebelled. No white man had ever seen so much as her shoulder. She wore her dresses long and full.

Then, softly, she removed her robe and dropped it outside the hogan door. Then the nylon gown. They all watched her, but their watching did not make her ashamed.

Her father built up the fire with small sticks of greasewood, sage, cedar, and oak-brush. Then he picked up the little drum again.

He was not singing an established song, but murmuring in a sing-song obvious comments about his actions.

He dipped his finger in a bowl of sheep tallow and wiped it on her stomach. He took a chili pepper and smeared it in the tallow on her belly. He rubbed the pepper across her chest. He drew the four directions across her brow and down her forehead and nose.

He drew a grease circle around her face.

"You stand in the center of the universe," he murmured.

"In blessing, you stand in the center.

"In welfare, you stand in the center.

"In beauty, you stand in the universe."

Then, each member of the family went to her and gave her a part of themselves. The men embraced her arms and legs as Begochiddy embraced the Ethkay-nah-ashi when he moved in time with the creation; they imparted to her their strength and endurance. The women embraced and shook her, too, breast and womb, imparting to her their fertility and survivability.

Betjegen felt their love filling her. Her heart tingled, and thrills ran down her arms, down her legs. Her body throbbed with a warmth that was the fire and was not.

Her father's voice murmured inside her chest:

"We know so little, little Betjegen. And what we know is known only at the edges.

"We appreciate and love what you intend when you come here, but you must understand that only we are the keepers of our own welfare.

"It is probably true that your boiled corn tastes better than our dried and parched corn. Ours is hard and wears our teeth flat with the chewing. But it is ours. And we like it. It is likely to be all we will ever have. If we taste yours, we may never again taste ours with pleasure."

BETJEGEN AWOKE to the thick, greasy smell of sheepskins. Someone had covered her, and her body was glowing with oily warmth. She opened her eyes. She was in the hogan alone. She knew that she had slept there alone.

In the ashes of the firepit, she recognized fragments of her chenille robe and knew that her nylon gown was there also. She sat up and felt her nakedness. Her breasts and belly had been smeared with sheep grease, red pigment, and charcoal. Her breath caught in her throat, choking back a wave of nausea. She could already hear Mary Lou holding her breath when she welcomed 'Betty-Jean' home with a hug and thinking, 'You smell like an Indian,' but catching herself and saying instead, "You probably want to take a nice long bath." Yes, her temperament required clean sheets and kitchens, but she wouldn't hurry that scene.

She stood up, went outside, and sat down in the mid-morning sun, wrapped in the sheepskin. The grease on her face absorbed the sun's heat, and she became aware of the four directions drawn on her face and the circle of the horizon around it. From such fragile symbols, her family drew strength. Why couldn't she also?

A Small Tone

LEWIS HORNE

FROM A DISTANCE she might have been taken for a child. But small though she was, she was not frail. Not Glenda Simms. A woman in her mid-thirties, she had a fierce energy, controlled by will power and a rigorous schedule. No day went by that was not used fully and properly.

Her older brother was a History professor at the University of Toronto, her younger brother an engineer involved in strange, perhaps secret, work for the government in Arkansas. Her parents had moved to a retirement village in California. Only she could not tolerate leaving "home."

What would happen to her Grandmother Simms' property without her to look after it? Glenda could still see the smile on that tiny white face as they secretly played their games, the two of them. She could still feel the frame of her body lift with a warming glow as she had when she became the "little princess," as her grandmother—"my beautiful mother of grandmothers"—had called her, reading to her—oh, how many times *The Princess and the Goblin*, *The Princess and Curdie*.

Then there was her music. A fine violinist, she taught in the elementary schools. She was concert mistress of the community symphony. She practiced every evening, determined to keep, to advance even, the perfectly placed, though rather small, tone from the instrument her parents had given her—at great expense—when she graduated from high school. Though she dreamed of Guarneris and Stainers and Storionis, she played her own with affection. She never lacked confidence in her playing, wherever she studied. Why should she? But away from home she did suffer from an appalling homesickness that left her without appetite, sent her scurrying down the steps of her rooming house as soon as she heard the mailman, made her curse ice and snow she could never warm herself against. She hated New Haven. But she disliked the perversity of Los Angeles even more when she worked there.

Yet she did take herself away for a few weeks of study each summer, returning always with a sense of relief.

IMAGINE HER SHOCK, walking in a week after Mary Malley's funeral, to find the clock missing! She'd been wondering what to do with the house, knowing it was too old for repair. Had it been anyone else but Mary, it would have fallen to pieces long ago. The lace tablecloth on the round oak table. Yellowed. Stiff with age. The daybed where her grandmother had lain. She recognized all the objects in the dim light, the roller shades drawn on the window. Then she'd seen the shelf in the corner of the living room. Empty.

Of course, Jeanine denied it, standing in the doorway of the little house in back, ashamed to let her in to see what a pigsty the house was. But she could see past her a box of Corn Flakes on the floor, newspapers strewn, the bed not made, the table not cleared. And flies—so many flies.

"Mary gave me a list," she said, "of everything that belonged to my grandmother. I expect to find—"

"Don't blame me for none of that junk." Jeanine was barefoot, the calves of her legs fat and white, her knees stained as though she'd been kneeling in something. Billy stood behind her in Levis, bare-chested, barefoot. "Billy can tell you I don't have none of that goddam junk."

"If I don't find everything on Mary's list in the house tomorrow, I'll call the police."

"Well, I like that. Go right ahead. I'll invite them in here to see the kind of shack you give poor unsuspecting people. I'll invite them in—"

"I've nothing more to say."

"I'll show them the kind of shit we got to put up with—"

As she turned, she saw Otis standing behind her in her grandmother's back yard.

"Don't you listen to her, Otis," cried Jeanine. "She's a trouble-making bitch."

His unpressed shirt was buttoned to his neck. His head was chiselled into sharp angles—nose, chin, cheekbones, forehead and eye sockets. She thought he looked embarrassed as he flipped back a strand of light reddish hair, smoothing it with a bony hand, holding it momentarily so that the stretched skin at the top of his face distorted his eyes.

"I'm missing a clock, Otis."

"I heard."

When he lowered his hand, she thought for a moment he would rest it on her shoulder, exposed by the sleeveless blouse she wore. But he dropped his hands to his hips, staring over her head at Jeanine and Billy until the door slammed. Then he dug with his tennis shoe at the packed dirt.

"It might be in my place," he said.

"Did you take it?"

"I didn't say that." The hardness in his slow gaze stunned her. Whose side was he on? "I just said it might be there. In my place."

"If you want the clock, Otis, all you have to do is ask me. I thought an awful lot of your mother, Otis, and if you—"

He snorted. "Hell, I was just talking. I don't have it."

"But if you want something—"

"Forget it." He walked away, swinging his arms, skinny, loose-limbed. At the back door of his house, he turned and said something.

"What?" She hurried closer. From the step he seemed even taller. He must have been a dozen years younger than she, but to look up at him, at the long body, the pale arms sprinkled with light hair and the sharp face that the sun made such shadows in, he seemed older than she. She felt like a young girl, baffled, unsure, vulnerable. "What?"

"Come back tomorrow," he said. "I'll have your clock for you."

SHE SPENT the morning practicing. Her music lay in three carefully sorted piles on a walnut table—chamber music, solo music and orchestral excerpts. Her work room—where she stood, striving for the sound, the right sound in that room, the room that gave back to her as no other room did the pure tone she wanted, worked for. "You have a fine technique. Now you need to feel it. In here. If it says *forte*, you have to feel the forte here—in your heart . . . You smile. But I am right." Not until she had practiced and showered did she turn her thoughts to the clock. As she lunched on cottage cheese, pineapple, dried apricots, and wholewheat bread, she thought of Jeanine. A policeman! The girl would condemn herself with her obscene mouth and her appearance. Talk about goblins! Besides there was Otis.

He'd turned into a strange man. Divorced, he was the only one of the Malley boys who hadn't sponged off his mother after he left home. He was the only one who had been dry-eyed at her funeral. Even she had grown misty-eyed, dabbing with her kleenex, following to the cemetery, her eyes red. Only as people turned away after the short service did she see Otis staring at her. For how long? For a moment she observed hatred, malice. Then no—not that. It was something else—reserve, aloofness from sorrow. Or was it? She'd been puzzled at the time. Then she'd forgotten about it. That was the day she'd stopped thinking of Otis as the little runt he'd once been. If he said he'd get the clock, she was confident he would.

When she got there, her grandmother's house—that faded sunken building with the little porch and honeysuckle vines—was

a small oven, stuffy with weeks of stale air, She went immediately into the living room, the floorboards slanted and uneven. The clock was still missing. Why? She had thought she could trust Otis.

It seemed such a petty thing—a stolen clock of little value. Yet every afternoon at lunchtime her grandmother had wound that clock. Its soft chimes rang the quarter hour. A soothing sound. As natural as falling water, a soft light.

You dirtied yourself with someone like Jeanine. All her life she'd tried to avoid such sullyng, keeping the events of her life close about her and under control. Let someone else—

She heard footsteps on the front porch. Yes, the police . . . The footsteps crossed the linoleum and the rug into the front room. Otis. Empty-handed.

"I thought you were bringing my clock."

He wore the same clothes he'd worn yesterday. Did these people change underwear? Socks? Her nostrils arched slightly.

"You must want it pretty bad."

It occurred to her, a fleeting thought, that he might be playing with her. A game.

"Yes," she said. "But it doesn't matter what I want. The clock belonged to my grandmother. It is now missing."

"And you think Jeanine took it?"

"Yes."

He smiled, his neck looking longer and thinner today with his shirt partly unbuttoned.

"Well, you won't find it here. Why don't you come over to my place?"

"Listen, Otis, either you have it or you don't. If you don't, I'm going to the police."

He gestured with his head. "Come over to my place."

SHE FOLLOWED him. He waited for her to lock the front door. Then he walked ahead of her across the lawn, to the doorway of the new house. The shirt flapped around his skinny body. The calves of his legs stretched hard as tendons against his Levis. He walked straight into his house without looking back.

With a water cooler humming, the air was cool and damp. The curtains were drawn. The air rippled a newspaper on the couch. Adjusting her eyes to the dimness, she turned—tools of some kind on the table, a card table covered with magazines, the couch looking as though a drawer had been overturned upon it. Through the door she could see a sink full of dirty dishes, hear water drip from the faucet . . . Even Otis—you couldn't trust any of them.

"Where did you put it?"

He closed the door. "How you like my place?"

She wouldn't stay longer than she had to. "Where is it?"

He said again, "How you like my place?"

"Your place!"

"I ever messed up on the rent?"

"I didn't come to talk about that, Otis."

"Oh hell," he said. "You got a one-track mind? That clock stopped running before I got married. You know, I used to watch you sometimes. I thought, 'Boy, there is someone who knows what she is doing. She never gets mixed up, not her.' I look out there—up there at—at the world, you know . . . And I think maybe nobody knows who I am and nobody cares. And there's a whole wall of people and I got to run against them. But here's one person who doesn't. Here's Glenda. She has it all under control. She's not going to lose. Not the way my Mom did. Not the way I'm losing. How do you think it feels to lose?"

She'd never heard him say so much before. At first, the words made little sense, coming from him with so little warning. But as they took hold, she wondered, What's he talking about? What does this have to do with—?

"Otis, I came here for my grandmother's clock."

"Piss on it."

"Otis—!"

"How come you never married?"

"I'm going," she said.

But he stepped in front of the door. "How come? Afraid you'd lose?"

The water in the kitchen sink—dripping . . .

"You could have found a guy. Or didn't you want to? Look at us. None of us finished high school. Billy and Jeanine—they were sixteen when they married. And Elwood and Clyde about the same. And living like pigs. It gets to you, doesn't it? You the princess."

Why are you telling me? She thought for a moment she spoke aloud.

"Filth. Scrub it away. Oh, you were good to my Mom. She liked the house and you let her stay there dirt cheap. But that's because she was clean. She could cuss better than Jeanine, but she was clean. She was tidy. But she—" He stepped toward her. "You didn't answer my question. How come you didn't marry? My Mom married and had four no-good pricks for sons who married no-good tramps—except . . . But my wife couldn't stand me. I bet you're a virgin, you got that starchy look. Like my wife did."

As she tried to get by him he grabbed her. He was skinny but strong. The large hands digging into her shoulders shoved her bones together, lifting her so that she raised to her toes. Even so, he was too tall to see straight into his eyes. Above the hum of the

water cooler, she could hear his breathing. One or two drops of water sprayed her cheek. She was not aware that she herself breathed.

Drawn so tautly, held so tautly, she thought of a violin string, thought of the tone that could be drawn. She thought of her own playing. "A small tone . . . Precisely placed. But the music—you've got to feel it in your heart, the sforzandos, the pianissimos, the phrases." Anything she might say would make such a small sound against his hard breathing. Against his rage, his hatred, and—yes, she saw it as he stared down into her face—his lust.

She should not resist.

His name came up from inside her and pushed against her lips. Her lips moved and her tongue clicked softly on the roof of her mouth.

"I'm filth," he said. "Aren't I?"

She didn't answer.

"Aren't I?"

He shook her, and she nodded. She wouldn't resist. She would keep her head about her.

"How'd you like some—?"

"—some—?"

"—like to lose to—?"

He didn't say the word, but it showed in the movement of his lips.

She was determined she wouldn't resist.

Yet she held back as he pulled her toward the dark bedroom with the rumpled bed, dirty clothes spilled about the floor. He squeezed her hand. She groaned with the pain. "No," she moaned, trying to free it. But misunderstanding, he tightened his grip, dragging her until she toppled across the bed.

Lying there, stripped of her clothes, her shoulders clutched again by his large hands, staring at his sweaty forehead, pale hair dangling, she heard the word.

"Filth," he grunted. The word he wanted. The bed creaked, rocked. "Filth."

"No—"

He closed his eyes. To her dismay. Destroyed her.

He gasped. "Fil—"

HE LAY with his arm across his eyes. She glanced at him once, wondering if he had fallen asleep. She felt sore—her arms, her shoulders, her bloodied opening. Did she have his teeth marks on her?

He didn't move as she got up to dress. She wanted more light to find her clothes, but she knew if she opened the curtain she'd see more of herself, more of Otis, more of the room than she wanted

now to see. It took some time to untangle her clothes from those lying on the floor—wet towels, underwear, work clothes, soiled sheets. Goblins. As she dressed, she heard him move behind her, but she didn't turn.

He said, "I'm supposed to be sorry, I guess."

She didn't answer. Her fingers trembled as she fastened her sandals and buttoned her blouse. Once she had her skirt around her, she stumbled to the door.

"Hey."

She stopped. But again she refused to turn.

"I won't say it then. But—"

She heard him sit up, and looked back. His hair fell across part of his face. He sat facing her with his knees drawn up, his shins and feet white in the murky light, his elbows resting on his knees.

"She sold it."

"Sold what?"

"She sold the goddam clock."

The news seemed irrelevant. When she made the connection, she said, "Did you know this yesterday?"

He made a gesture with his hand that could have meant yes or no.

She felt as though someone watched her all the way to the car, trying to walk steadily with the strong damp soreness between her legs, the aches she felt. These Malleys . . . She felt sullied. So much out there—out of control. Everywhere. Out there. When she tried to open the car door, a pain went through her hand. She thought of the community orchestra, of her violin, of her practice this morning—and wondered if she'd ever play again as she had before.

David Rittenhouse Unveils His Orrery

(College of Philadelphia, 1771)

AUSTIN HUGHES

*(David Rittenhouse, the astronomer,
was trained as a clockmaker. He first
achieved fame for constructing a
mechanical planetarium or "orrery.")*

God has been likened by philosophers
to a clockmaker; so I, a clockmaker,
have four years been imitating God
in my intricate labor on this orrery,
this mechanical system of the heavens.
See here this ball of gilded brass, my sun,
and here by ivory planets, each in its orbit.
When I turn the crank, all revolve,
sped by a curious, hidden mechanism;
so I reveal the exact position
of each body in our solar system
each day, for five thousand terrestrial years.

If any man fault me as demiurge,
observing that my planets are too large
in relation to my sun, while at the same time
the distances between them are too small;
noting as well that I have drawn my orbits
circular, rather than elliptical;
I will confess these failings and, by his leave,
show him a dozen more. But I would ask
my critic to consider just how many men,
masters or journeymen, have yet succeeded
in crafting even intellectual engines
fit to be admitted as fair copies
of the universe; whose massive forms
God the juggler with uncanny hands
has set in perfect motion—arbitrary,
illogical, unruly though it seems
to us, men and mechanics as we are.

Faustus The Monster

LESLIE GARRETT

FLESH

THE OBJECT of my early love was a monster. He was a celebrity in our town, our monster.

But I say love when it was not love then at all. At twenty-one who can love a monster? We are hurried; it is uncomfortable; we seek palliatives. We do not even dream that our own monsterness is yet to come.

His name was Faustus Weinmeher—improbable name for improbable monster—and at the age of sixteen he was six feet tall and weighed over five hundred pounds: there was little hope that he would ever stop growing. He was the son of our town's only druggist—a bespectacled, deeply sensitive little man who sweated flowers upon the back of his shirts and beneath his armpits each summer. He seemed constantly bemused; as if seeking some clue, some reason for his unlikely progeny?

Of course, Faustus could not attend the public school after the fourth grade (he had anyway been made miserable by the taunts of his classmates, and so released to early indulgence); there was no private school in the town, or even nearby; and so a tutor came five times a week—an expense the little druggist could hardly afford. But he was thrifty as well as tireless, and no doubt did without himself to provide for his son—that son he had been told would probably not live to see twenty anyhow. I was engaged to tutor Faustus for his last year at school.

I might mention that as the son of the town drunk, who had in spite of my handicap achieved scholastic eminence both there and at the university, I was accorded a provisional respect. But I had decided upon a career in writing; I was demoniac and had unapproved tastes in companions of drunks and outcasts myself; and I never forgave myself for allowing the town to accept me at all.

One would think that one so afflicted as Faustus would be a gloomy pupil. But no; each time I visited him in the large back bedroom his huge smile of greeting dismissed as unimportant nature's judgment upon his flesh. The room would be piled high with magazines and letters and brochures from a hundred sources. He spent much of his time answering the advertisements in the backs of the pulp magazines he read; and as a result he received

a large but essentially worthless volume of mail. This was not done out of naivete, however, but from what I soon discovered was an ebullient and capacious interest in the absurd. Scattered about the bed and floor would be literature on the cures of hemorrhoids and acne; on lotions and exercises, written in almost mystical prose, to affect breast development in women; pills to cure alcoholism and tobacco addiction; matrimonial agencies which offered in slightly-veiled concupiscent prose handsome, wealthy suitors to lonely women, and volumptuous maidens to lonely men; pills to re-visit virility upon aging men, and to achieve temporary sterility in young ones; caged love birds; *Breeding Mink at Home for Fun and Profit*; *Numerology Made Easy*; *Madame Zora Tells You the Secrets of Life and Death . . .* and *Faustus* would be propped up huge in that bed among chips of pillows, smiling the most enormous smile at the expectation of showing me some new acquisition of absurdity.

After the lessons were finished I would sometimes stay on in the room for a time with *Faustus*. He was an extraordinary sight, but in no way horrible. His huge face was pink; he had big puffs of black hair like giant fuzz. In spite of his bulk, there was a curious delicacy about him: he seemed as fragile and insubstantial as a foetus. His skin particularly gave this impression—that of a thin shell that could be punctured with one light thrust of the finger.

He said to me once, with that strange solemnity in one so young, "There are advantages to being like this. People reveal themselves to me. I think they believe that because of my abnormality I am inwardly unlike them too. They think of me as something less than real, so they show themselves to me in ways they would not normally show themselves before others. It is a kind of release for them to shed their disguises in the belief that no creature so removed from normality as myself will recognize their deceptions. It is like looking at people through a one-way mirror."

He had been leaning forward in the bed; now he eased back, springs squeaking. Where his great weight had been for so long, the mattress sagged to nearly the floor. With some effort, he lifted one of his huge arms. Upon one finger his dead mother's wedding band had been cut to fit upon that smallest of his fingers.

"There is a woman who visits me," *Faustus* continued. "I don't know why she comes; she just heard of me and one day she appeared." He moved again. Because of his size, his position when sitting was precarious. Now he rocked a moment, steadying himself with his hands upon the mattress on either side, and waiting in silence until he had settled. Then he resumed:

"She comes now and then, and she brings me little presents." He dug beneath one of the pillows, then held up, mangled and torn,

a toy facsimile of a man made from crepe paper dangling from a string. It was made so that when the string was jerked the paper man would fold up and down like an accordion in replica of a dance; but so mutilated was it now that it merely spun and flailed its torn arms and legs.

"I am not a child," he said. "I am not an imbecile." Then he stared for a long time out the window.

It was the only time I ever heard him speak of his affliction other than jokingly.

There was a childish side to Faustus too. Now and then he would decide the lessons tiresome and want to talk instead. And when I insisted I was paid to teach and not talk, Faustus would sulk, and even once took the books and deposited them somewhere beneath his huge body; and then sat there with an expression of such idiot satisfaction at the impossibility of my retrieving them from there that we had both finally laughed at the ridiculousness of it.

When the summer came I would sometimes come by and take him for walks. Not often; for Faustus to dress for the street was a major undertaking: he was so delicate he had to be dressed in full for any excursion outside the house. He was a strange sight to see, this lumbering giant, on the sun-heated summer streets, clothed in sweater and scarf and stocking cap pulled down to below his ears.

Even then Faustus was a celebrity in the town: he had been written about in the local papers; and once a journalist had come from Philadelphia. Small children would watch him with something like awe when we passed; older ones would approach him now and then and ask impertinent questions with what was obviously false bravado. But I could tell that none of them could bring themselves to despise him. He was a monster, yes, but an avatar to them too in a way. Perhaps they sensed that that mountain housed misericordes of faith that might one day serve them.

When they had passed on, Faustus would be grave and silent for a long time, as if some part of them, insubstantial as the plumage of young birds, floated forever lost to him upon the heated summer air.

GHOST

I REMEMBER FAUSTUS later in the large bed; by the end of the summer he could only occasionally leave it. He weighed then nearly five hundred and fifty pounds, and his weight was increasing at the rate of a pound a week. He sat amid a plethora of magazines and literature, clipping advertisements and coupons from them with a pair of scissors that seemed like a child's toy in

his hands. With characteristic insouciance, he had appropriated from somewhere a bed cap and wore it always there. Greeting me for the first time wearing it, he grinned outlandishly, fully aware of and enjoying its preposterous incongruity upon one so young. His eyes had begun to weaken, and he now wore too a pair of rimless glasses that, since they were too small of course for his large face, gave him a ludicrous look. He informed me very solemnly that he could now imitate a giant goldfish; and blowing up his already enormous cheeks, eyes popping behind the spectacles, he became a giant goldfish.

He sat among the dozens of pieces of paper, now and then laughing or throwing out to me sardonic comments upon them, his swollen hands fumbling among them. Above the bed, for his convenience, now hung a rope that connected to a bell in the back of his father's store: it stretched upon metal eyelets the length of the ceiling through the house like the improbable tail of some hidden beast.

That summer too we went to three or four movies. These were among the few movies Faustus had ever seen, and they made a deep impression upon him.

The only movie in the vicinity was on the highway between Serenity and Port Wayne: *THE RIALTO*, shoved back among tall pines. Damp, sequestered, it was a fitting place for the contemplation of phantoms. A long building, with its worn and peeling planks of silver paint, it looked like a giant fish secreted there. Inside were rows of wooden benches instead of seats and two potbellied stoves in front for heat: those who sat more than six rows from these in winter huddled in coats and caps and gloves, breathing, like monsters too, mists of breaths.

We would take my car; we could remove one of the front seats so that, with a great deal of pushing, Faustus would finally plunge, sweating and heaving breath and with a great convulsion of springs, onto the back seat; and when it was over he would always be smiling out the diminished window, as if he had accomplished some magnificent feat.

That was when I discovered that Faustus had in him some of the soft madness of his kind; sought strange anodynes. This was toward the end of World War II, and of all the films the ones Faustus loved best were of the war. It was as if he saw something in them equal to his own grandeur; and when there appeared at the time a young blond actor, Kurt Krueger, who portrayed sensitive and idealistic German officers in those films, Faustus became his admirer.

But madness is sometimes conciliatory too; it shapes its images from desire; and for a while during that summer Faustus

became that blond actor in his little madness. He did it nearly a week before I set out upon one of my journeys (peregrinations that were, unknown to me then, ever widening, to include much of the world finally, and finally never again home) by bleaching his hair with a bottle of peroxide from his father's store. Only it did not turn the beautiful blond of the actor as he had intended, but a startling white. He sat then before me a little shamefaced; and it was a glorious sight to see—that mountainous body with the crown of white, dazzling hair like cotton.

I watched him squirm uncomfortably in his shame as he displayed this new image to me; then he was laughing and suddenly we were both laughing.

Often during my winter journey along the Florida coast I thought of him amid the chaos of that room, his white crown resplendent; and smiling now and then perhaps at that extravagant affirmation.

VITIATION OF FLESH

FAUSTUS THE MONSTER I LOVED YOU: that is what I scrawled in deciduous drunkenness upon the table of a cafe in Montparnasse. Perhaps the guilt started there, the thought that, having abandoned Faustus, I was in part responsible for his desiccation.

When I returned it was to prepare for the next journey—the final leap, the break from town and past.

Faustus had changed even more. For one thing, he had achieved another fame through one of his pranks. It is difficult to explain, but for years Faustus had lived in innocence of his monstrosity: he was a monster, but he had never allowed himself to think of himself as monster; he had never been totally confronted with the fact of his monstrosity before. Now, because of his prank, he was inundated with it; and the process of vitiation began.

He had inserted an advertisement in one of his magazines stating that he was a monster; weighed over five hundred and fifty pounds; would not cease to grow the the remainder of his life at approximately a pound a week. He stated that because of his uniqueness and the insight it gave him he had acquired an astuteness in the problems of men that had made him qualified to guide others with similar afflictions in living their lives. For one dollar he would answer all letters and offer guidance. He signed himself *THE KINDLY MONSTER*.

Within a month Faustus had received nearly fifty letters addressed to *THE KINDLY MONSTER*, and he bought a second-

hand typewriter, taught himself to type, and began his labors. At first it was with the same enthusiasm and humor as his other pursuits; then it changed. His had been a carefree, happy life, and suddenly he was deluged by all of the sick, the tortured, the maimed. It was as if a poisonous flower had bloomed quickly inside him which corrupted and darkened every part of him; and almost overnight, with this unexpected knowledge of the torment of others, he was transformed.

There was one Primo Valtrioni, a laborer who with genuine horror related to *THE KINDLY MONSTER* his recurrent passion for devouring small creatures alive; Priscilla Monteleve, who had neither arms nor legs and spent most of her days deposited like a living vase upon a mantelpiece within a three-sided polished oak box; the remains of a man who had been nearly wholly devoured by rats while lying drunk in a deserted warehouse; a man who had fins for arms; Mildred Krews, who had neither ears nor nose: Faustus dreamed now of these monsters, and others, at night. They seemed to be invading the town, and his room; and he could not turn away from them.

I came to the house just once before I left. Faustus had changed physically as well: his face was still without a sign of wrinkles, the pinkish skin stretched so tightly across it it was almost transparent; the little spectacles still ridiculous on his huge face. But now he looked tired and almost old.

Hanging from a wall now was an old-fashioned frock coat and striped ambassador trousers; and on a chair below them a cane and a bowler hat and a pair of spats. Faustus smiled, but it was only a drained and tired attempt at his old smile.

"I had them made especially for me . . . a literary man now you know. An editor wants me to do an article on myself . . . and them; and I found I have a flair for it." Then, with a weary shrugging of his shoulders: "The clothes . . . I can go out once in a while still; and they make me feel . . . human."

Gone was the confusion in the room: no more magazines and pamphlets; now a metal filing cabinet beside the bed and stacks of mail and neatly typed letters ready to be posted. Before him, a toy in his lap, was the typewriter, with what appeared to be an unfinished letter in it. Faustus gestured to it with his huge hand: "I make a bit of a living doing this. I have more than I can handle." And then, almost to himself, his big face tracing the room as if expecting to find them there: "I never knew there were so many of them."

The next days were happy ones for me: I was busy packing, making plans, dreaming of that new life I would enter. But I saw Faustus again before I left.

It was upon the street, and only for a few minutes. It was possible that Faustus saw me too, but if he did he gave no sign: our last meeting had shown us irrevocably strangers now.

It was strange, almost dusk of that last day, and as I turned the corner I came suddenly upon him. He stood there immense and seemingly alone in the middle of the large square—in that small town, a weird apparition in bowler hat and frock coat and cane and spats. It was all silence; the square deserted. The little park in the middle of the square was already abloom with the pink heads of heliotrope; birds hopped idiotically upon the bushes that encircled the park, as if insanely attempting to pack them down. Without thinking, as if already myself containing the first bloom of shame, I stepped back into a doorway.

At first, Faustus looked unspeakably alone: his big head moved slowly, as if seeking something there in the slow dusk. Then I noticed a little boy waiting impatiently and with a very bored expression a few paces in front of him. The boy stood with his shoulders hunched, his chin drawn in under his cap, and now and then peering anxiously around as if in fear of being seen. The boy held in his hand the end of a rope which he kept looking at distastefully, as if fighting the desire to fling it down; the other end was tied round Faustus' splendidly coated waist.

Faustus, as if at last satisfied that what he sought there about him in the deserted square was or was not there, turned at last ponderously to the boy and gave what sounded to me like a short command. Immediately, the boy pushed his cap farther down over his face and, face still turned downward, braced his feet against the cement of the square and pulled heavily upon the rope. Faustus' body seemed to shudder like a mountain about to stir to life, and almost moved forward; then stopped. Faustus gave his command again; the boy heaved again; and the big body pitched suddenly forward and began to move slowly off.

It was then that I saw the children who had been hiding inside the bushes of the park: bright patches of clothing came suddenly alive and began mingling in excited congress; now and then a head would peep over the edge of bushes, its bright cap like the bud of a giant flower.

Slowly they emerged, and followed Faustus and his surly companion. They moved down the street like a bedraggled army behind a huge, captured beast; the boy still held the rope for all the world as if he had in tow some impossible animal in which he refused utterly to believe. Now and then a child would call out—and run upon them; one shouted a derisive remark at Faustus' companion. But Faustus, immense and impassive, oblivious of

them, just moved his great head slowly, as if searching the night-blossoming sky.

GHOST IN MONTPARNASSE

IN THE HOUSE I lived in was a man with a wooden foot: I would think sometimes of Faustus and his people when I saw the French workman. He was a tall, powerful man with big mustaches. The crude, artificial foot he wore was of wood—carved, I imagined by himself. During the mornings of that solitary winter I would lie awake shivering under a thin blanket in my small, unheated room on the rue Stanislas; I would hear the clumping of that foot upon the stairs; and from my bed I would look out the window and watch the man walk tall and limping along the street and out of sight. In a way, that silent, dignified cripple was my only contact with the world around me.

Solitary, I spent my days reading or walking the Paris streets. When the milder weather came approaching spring, I would sit out among the cafe tables beneath lashes of awnings, or in the impacted stillness of the Cimetière Montparnasse: slow but certain reclamation beside the grave of Maupassant. And it was here at that time that I read the letter from Faustus's father.

I knew what the letter would say before I opened it; perhaps that was why I had chosen the cemetery; for around the envelope ran the black border of mourning. Who else but that gentle, scholarly man would have chosen the envelopes of mourning? For they belonged to an older, less frivolous time; and they signaled now perfectly a genuine grief.

I opened the letter upon the small, precise handwriting:

"I know you will be saddened first to learn that my son and your friend Faustus passed from us peacefully two weeks ago this date. Perhaps your sorrow might be lightened a bit by the knowledge that during his last days he spoke of you frequently. Because of this, your friendship, and because of the many kindnesses you showed him while he was still among us, I offer you these words as to his last days. I think you will be particularly comforted, as I have been, to know that those days were passed in something like peace.

You know, of course, of my son's occupation during that last year, of his work with those unfortunates. What perhaps you don't know is that it was done for the most part without my approval. I don't know—it is so difficult to understand now . . . You would think that wisdom comes with age, wouldn't you? At least that is what we are told, but perhaps it is the merciful myth that leads us on to what is more often than not a terror at our final knowledge of the impossible complexity of existence; that there are no answers, nor were there intended to be; but without that myth we would choose not to go

on at all. (Please excuse these wanderings. They are an indulgence you may understand I allow myself now.) What I am trying to say is that the occupation of my son's last year struck me as less than humane. He was capricious; he could act the fool; but could he, or anyone hate, and hate so darkly, that he could use and mislead those unfortunates for his own amusement, or vindictiveness? Perhaps, in the final analysis, all that can really be said about Faustus was that he was a strange boy. (I hesitate to use that word now. Was he ever a boy to me?) Perhaps it was his affliction, which God knows visited him so cruelly and without precedence among us. Whatever it was, he did not see things as others do. He saw as if—well, as if he were outside of life. Yes, I think that is what I mean. So how could he have dealt with those people, those others like him, except through the particular and, I think, distorted vision of one who does not belong to life? Does it not take one whose vision is dedicated to the completeness of life, and not its particular dark corners, to deal completely with it? Perhaps I am wrong. I am not attempting to judge my son or his activities during that last year. I want only to understand.

As to his happiness, I am not certain I believe wholly in that either, or want to. For, as you may possibly have heard, he was married a scant few months before his death.

Do you know of the lady, my young friend? I wonder how much my son might have told you of their relationship during your last visit to us, for I know he was in correspondence with her then. At any rate, she was one of his correspondents, a Miss Priscilla Montcleve. I am sorry to relate that his unfortunate young lady (She was, I believe, not much younger than forty, so am I guilty here of sarcasm?) was without either arms or legs; that furthermore she spent most of her day in a satin-lined box (I shall not attempt to conceal my disgust, no matter how ashamed of it I may be.) Naturally, I attempted to dissuade my son from this unfortunate and—I must admit again distaste—unhealthy alliance. But of course I was unsuccessful—my son was adamant as ever—and they were married.

I would like to believe, my friend, that I wished this young lady no ill. I felt compassion for her as I would any person so afflicted. And I was not unmindful of the affliction, no matter how different in nature, of my own son. It was just that . . . Here thought fails me, as usual, when it is most necessary. I am not certain what my thoughts were and will not burden this letter further with excesses. I will simply relate the facts as they occurred so that you may infer what you will from them.

First, it seems that Miss Montcleve—my son's wife—was a woman of some means; she brought with her a maid who attended to her; so between her money and that which my son earned from his labors they were quite independent of me. But, of course, she moved

into the room (she paid to furnish the attic for her maid), as indeed I would have had to insist she do, considering my son's condition. She spent most of her day in her box upon a chair beside his bed.

I must admit here that there was a sort of sweetness about the woman, even a shyness that made one rather drawn to her, and I am inclined to believe she loved my son and was to him during those months a wife in spirit if not in fact. I do not wish to be crude, nor do I in any way wish to disesteem their relationship, but must this not indeed have been a marriage of—How shall I say it?—reciprocal charity? I should think so; and indeed I hope so.

Also, I must admit, no matter my own feelings in the matter, that she vigorously and enthusiastically assisted him in that work which he continued to labor at until the last.

There is no need to go on. You must have passed on into your own life now, and perhaps these confidences are embarrassing to you. If you will bear with me, there is only a little more.

Happiness, I asked? Perhaps. I know that from the time my son took on those labors he was changed, in a sense the victim of them, but that after she came I would now and then—not often, perhaps once or twice; I'm not certain—hear what sounded like laughter from the room. Do you think it is too much to hope for—that he had found through her, if only for a short time, his way back to the living world? I can only say that I hope so.

A bit more. My son died on the twelfth of April of this year, as I have said, and was laid to rest with dignity as I felt he would have wanted it.

Priscilla was heartbroken, of course, and she insisted—I am certain it was only grief that so distorted her sense of decorum—that she purchase for him a sarcophagus and that a life-size statue of my son should surmount it with angel's wings and the inscription, **THE KINDLY MONSTER—HUMANITARIAN**. However, reason prevailed, and your friend and my son rests now under the simple inscription, **LOVING SON AND HUSBAND**.

My sincere best wishes,

Ludwig Weinmeher"

So he was gone; and with him the contiguities of a life. I thought for a moment of the proposed sarcophagus—the giant stone figure with angel's wings sprouting from it, and the inscription **THE KINDLY MONSTER—HUMANITARIAN**; and I knew that it was just that in flagrant absurdity the old Faustus would have wanted. A phrase in the letter kept repeating itself to me: *reciprocal charity*. Was it that; or was it that possibly once, just once (Had he not said he had heard laughter from the room?) the old Faustus had indeed appeared, the glorious Faustus—and

in that room with the limbless woman, he lifted her up like a goblet to toast a last and beautiful absurdity?

Perhaps not; but I preferred that image to the other; and when later I went to those cafes I could not help smiling at the thought. But as I sat drinking and grinning like a madman at that magnificent image I did not know that where Faustus's passion had ended my own had begun.

God Sang

KELLY CHERRY

God sang in the tall trees; he shone
On the water glinting like jewels.
I rippled his face with a flung stone.

Deaf as a Post

ALBERT F. MORITZ

November served a flower to the tide
which followed into the tunnel where an abolished country
sang softly to the tiny corpse of its language:

"You too are called upon to suffer, to decline and die."

The red flower

was pulled apart by red nails and deposited in an envelope
in which everything that has been severed or disconnected
is on its way to some address.

Everything: farms burning and laughing

because they are only dirty windows

through which wheat and profit watch each other with longing
and make clumsy signs.

Bushes of razors clinging to a windy slope

with the passion of a meeting place.

Even dust lifted by horns

to the shattered trays

of the servant of a hundred broken arms.

Even lonely women who invite us to stay for dinner

and who astonish and dismay us

with their desperation.

And now a disconnected signal,

long after the death of the impulse that gave it birth,

is carried along the street in a mailman's leather sack

or higher, rides in a needle

that wounds and stitches the sky with smoke.

Folded upon itself, this message: ignorant,

far removed from the superior nature of language,

and in fact totally asleep,

not even dreaming of the power of a young girl

whose arm pierced the earth to create it.

It was only yesterday, at dawn: she rose

to mark this shore,

to destroy idly with horrible pain a red flower.

Three Poems

KELLY CHERRY

On a Sunny Slope

Red poppies on a sunny slope
The earth between your toes
The hummingbird's hope
Of the worm in the rose
And thistledown where the north wind blows!

Voices

The voice in the dark says: Fear, and the voice at noon
says: But, the voice I hear in my heart says: Soon.

Triplet of the Poet's Longing

The fruit tree glows under a gibbous moon
And time hums its haunting tune.
My mood's as blue as water, a lost lagoon.

Contributors

CHARLES BRASHERS teaches Creative Writing at San Diego State University; his versatility as a writer has led him into textbooks, criticism, and articles of general interest as well as stories. ROBERT DeMOTT teaches at Ohio University and co-edits *The Back Door*, a poetry journal. Our submissions come from all over; we are proud to publish here a story from close to home: LESLIE GARRETT lives in Philadelphia. LEWIS HORNE is at the University of Saskatchewan; his stories have appeared in *Ascent*, *Canadian Fiction*, *Ontario Review*, and other journals. A graduate student in Biology at West Virginia University, AUSTIN HUGHES was encouraged to submit his poem by his father, Georgetown professor Riley Hughes, whose own work has appeared here. The author of several poetry volumes, A.F. MORITZ has two new collections appearing this year: *Signs and Certainties* (Montreal) and *Between the Root and the Flower* (Vancouver). With an M.A. in Creative Writing from Syracuse University, FREDERIC MURATORI is currently a tutor in the HEOP Program in Syracuse and publishing work in a number of journals. From even closer to home comes JOHN P. ROSSI, Chairman and Professor of History at La Salle. His *Transformation of the British Liberal Party* will appear soon in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, thus putting him in the company of Benjamin Franklin. KELLY CHERRY, whose short poems have graced our summer issue for three years, joins us for her first autumn.

Editor: John Christopher Kleis

Poetry Editor: Richard Lautz

Business Manager: Jean M. Bullock

Editorial Associates: John J. Seydow, Jean M. Bullock, Joe Boyce.

and Special Thanks to: James A. Butler and John J. Keenan